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*I'm not a teacher: only a fellow-traveller of
whom you asked the way. I pointed ahead—
ahead of myself as well as of you.*

—G.B.S., in *Getting Married*



Number Six

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Shaw and Shakespeare

by Archibald Henderson¹

Shakespear was a blackleg! This startling headline, which once assailed my eyes from the columns of an English newspaper, was the first gun in Shaw's war against Shakespeare heard by me during the half-century I have served as his authorized biographer. But Shaw's acquaintance with, and interest in, Shakespeare actually covered the amazing period of some eighty-five years. Even before Shaw joined the Fabian Society, he became a member of the New Shakespeare Society, founded and directed by F. J. Furnivall, whom Shaw, many years later, publicly and vigorously recommended for original membership in the Royal Academy of Letters, then on the point of being founded. At the meetings of the New Shakespeare Society, Shaw often participated in the discussions, which were of a highly animated character. After an exhaustive examination of the Society's *Proceedings*, I find that in Shaw's absence, on February 29, 1884, a Miss Latham read to the Society his paper on *Troilus and Cressida*, which he regarded as one of Shakespeare's most interesting and iconoclastic plays—"Shakespear's protest against Homer's attempt to impose upon the world and against Chapman for upholding him." Shaw found *Cressida* to be a "most enchanting" figure and Shakespeare's *first real woman*. He unhesitatingly pronounced the play, with the exception of twenty lines, authentic Shakespeare.

A year or so later, at the British Museum, Shaw met and frequently discussed Shakespeare with Thomas Tyler, who was then writing a book on Shakespeare's sonnets, which Shaw, at Tyler's request, reviewed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 7, 1886. In this book, Tyler identified the "dark lady" of the sonnets with Mary Fitton, and Shaw's review had historic consequences, for both Frank Harris and Shaw tentatively accepted Tyler's identification and wrote plays having Mary Fitton as a leading character. Shaw's play, the delightful *jeux d'esprit* "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets," which was written for the benefit of a fund for erecting a national theatre in memory of Shakespeare, was greeted for the most part with laughter, ironic and rueful, over Shaw's portrait of Shakespeare in his own image, frequently making notes on his tablets of felicitous expressions naturally employed in speech by the attendants: "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," "Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us," and the like. The public indignation was registered by *not a single contribution being made to the fund*. Shaw was surprised and miffed by this rebuff, and wrote in the preface to the published play: "I had unfortunately represented Shakespear as treasuring and using (as I do myself) the jewels of unconsciously musical speech which common people utter and throw away every day; and this was taken as a disparagement of Shakespear's 'originality.'"

1. Dr. Henderson, President of the Shaw Society of America, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, is the author of countless books and articles on many subjects, but is best known for his half-a-century devotion to the study of Bernard Shaw and his work. The present essay is, in substance, the address given by Dr. Henderson at the Annual General Meeting of The Shaw Society of America on March 28, 1954.

In view of Shaw's long, violent, and unbridled denigration of Shakespeare, public indignation was not wholly surprising or unjustified. Nor did it warrant Shaw in the flippant comment: "Why was I born with such contemporaries? Why is Shakespeare made ridiculous by such a posterity?" Perhaps it was Shaw who was made ridiculous by his good-natured but ill-timed caricature of the Immortal Bard.

In the Preface to his *Plays Unpleasant* (1898), Shaw bemoaned the lack of explanatory prefaces to the works of Shakespeare, which might have supplied a sort of compendium of his philosophy. "It is for want of this elaboration," he commented, "that Shakespeare, unsurpassed as poet, storyteller, character draughtsman, humorist, and rhetorician, has left us no intellectually coherent drama, and could not afford to pursue a genuinely scientific method in his studies of character and society, though in such unpopular plays as *All's Well* [*That Ends Well*], *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, we find him ready and willing to start at the twentieth century if the seventeenth would only let him."

Historically, Shaw's aggressive campaign of Shakespeare-depreciation began with the opening year of the present century. Up to this time, he had frequently associated his name as dramatist with that of Shakespeare, whom he would jocularly refer to as "my famous rival," which always elicited good-humored jeers from his auditors. But in the Preface to *Caesar and Cleopatra* (written in 1898, published in 1900) he boldly challenged Shakespeare's supremacy as a dramatist, in an extended essay entitled "Better than Shakespeare?" Although these words were followed by an interrogation point, the drama critics and journalists, and later the public generally, ignored the query and laughed consumedly at the arrogance and impudence of this cosmic clown. His critical *expose* of Shakespeare is devastating but easily answered, since he commits the cardinal blunder of attributing to Shakespeare the views of his leading characters, views carefully chosen to exhibit hedonism, pessimism, and the lack of any reasoned philosophy of life. But he plausibly claims that, on the basis of the researches of Theodor Mommsen and other modern historians, it is possible for a present-day writer to draw a more realistic and veridical portrait of Julius Caesar. He never claimed that he could write a better play about Caesar than Shakespeare's; and he once diffidently remarked to me that probably he was too young to have attempted a drama about so towering and complex a figure. One can assure himself, by reading Mommsen's findings and Gerard Walter's monumental biography, that Shaw's *Caesar* is a portrait, not of Julius Caesar, but of Bernard Shaw. Shakespeare overtops Shaw here, since his *Julius Caesar* is a *pastiche* from Plutarch and other early historians and not a portrait of William Shakespeare. I wish to testify, however, that I found Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* much more vivid, gripping and entertaining than Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, played on successive nights by the Oliviers. Shaw won the day — or rather the night! — by a large margin, judged by audience reaction. Shakespeare's play seemed like an ancient piece of bric-a-brac from an historical museum; Shaw's like a magic, pulsing, pictorial evocation of human life.

From 1900 onward, for a quarter of a century, Shaw was publicly regarded as a self-professed rival of Shakespeare; and on that theme

the journalists, cartoonists and burlesquers went to town. In 1905 Mr. S. T. James of Leeds devised a cryptogram proving, beyond doubt, that Shaw had written the plays of Shakespeare. E. T. Reed, the clever cartoonist, drew a delightful caricature (based on the portrait of David Garrick patronizingly resting his arm on Shakespeare's bust at Stratford) of Shakespeare and Shaw, designated "Man and Superman," and bearing the title, "John Bull's Other Playwright." And Oliver Herford executed a brilliant caricature of Shaw, "the vegetable souperman," crowning the "greatest playwright of his day" — a bust of himself; while upon the wall hangs a portrait of Shakespeare — inverted.

II

As a judge of Shakespeare, both in the study and on the stage, Shaw had a long, rich and varied experience. He read all of Shakespeare as a boy, could quote freely from any of the plays, and knew almost all of *Hamlet* by heart. His style was profoundly influenced by the Bible, Shakespeare, and Bunyan; and he has said he had to struggle to throw off the influence of Shakespearean blank verse upon his own style. Saturated with the Bible and Shakespeare before he was ten years old, he later declared: "When I was twenty I knew everybody in Shakespeare from Hamlet to Abhorson much more intimately than I knew my living contemporaries." During the thirty-odd years down to the conclusion of his period (1895-1898) as drama critic for *The Saturday Review*, he had seen twenty-three different plays of Shakespeare produced upon the stage—so imperfectly indeed that, as he put it, "If I had not read them as well, my impression of them would be not merely incomplete, but violently distorted and falsified."

In 1924 he protested indignantly against the habitual playing of Shakespeare "with his brains cut out," and scored popular producers for "the mutilations and repiecing which would have sickened the staff of a Chicago abattoir." His humanitarianism no less than his aestheticism was profoundly shocked by Henry Irving's "disembowelment" of Shakespeare, and in his obituary of Irving he wrote, "He mutilated the remains of the dying Shakespeare . . . his Shylock was not Shakespeare's Shylock, his Iachimo not Shakespeare's Iachimo, his Lear not Shakespeare's Lear." He denounced Augustin Daly for adaptations and revisions made "on the assumption that Shakespeare was a botcher and he an artist." In a letter (February 22, 1928) to John Barrymore, in criticism of his Freudian extravaganza called Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Shaw protested against the appalling number of cuts, the greatest number in stage history; praised Shakespeare's beautiful rhetoric above the cheap demonstration of the Oedipus complex; urged Barrymore to play Shakespeare straight; and to "concentrate on acting rather than on authorship, at which, believe me, Shakespeare can write your head off."

Shaw, who considered himself an "ardent Shakespearean" despite his deadly machine-gun blasts at the Swan of Avon, always stood out vehemently for the production of Shakespeare's plays in their integrity.

III

Shortly before Shaw met William Archer, the latter was already acquainted with Ibsen's dramatic works and preparing for the task of

translating them into English. Shaw's friend, Eleanor Marx-Aveling, daughter of the author of *Das Kapital*, was also soon absorbed in the translation of several of Ibsen's plays in succession; and at the Marx-Avelings, Shaw took the part of Krogstad in a reading of *A Doll's House*. After visiting Ibsen at Saeby, Archer wrote to his brother Charles (July, 1887), "He is essentially a kindred spirit with Shaw—a paradoxist, a sort of Devil's Advocate." Shaw quickly recognized in Ibsen a revolutionary spirit cognate with his own, and on July 18, 1890, at the St. James's Restaurant, London, delivered a lecture on Ibsen which created a shattering impression. (This essay in extended form was published in 1891 under the title *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*.) But when a radical Dutchman, J. T. Grein, organized the Independent Theatre and produced Ibsen's *Ghosts* at the Royalty Theatre, Soho, on March 13, 1891, such denunciatory outbursts and bedlamite gibberings were elicited from the critics and press as had not been heard in the history of the British theatre. Archer defended Ibsen in the *Fortnightly Review* and threatened to publish a *Schimpflexicon* of the scurrilous and almost universal abuse; and Shaw was equally militant in Ibsen's defence in his *Quintessence of Ibsenism*. I need only say that this incident was the exciting cause in setting off Shaw's campaign of denigration of Shakespeare, which continued for more than thirty years. It was brought about, as all the world knows, by his insistent but unsuccessful effort to induce Henry Irving to produce the plays of Ibsen and the modern school of dramatists, including his own.

Upon many occasions Shaw publicly derided Shakespeare; and to the day of Irving's death, he savagely employed all his brilliant powers of invective and ridicule to discredit him as a great histrionic interpreter of leading Shakespearean roles at the Lyceum. Reports of Shaw's lectures on Shakespeare were so badly garbled that, in self defence, he finally published in the London *Daily News*, April 13, 1905, an abstract of his sensational lecture at the Kensington Town Hall. Like a dramatic Martin Luther, Shaw nailed to the door of public notoriety twelve affirmations of his views regarding Shakespeare. He was soon effectively answered by Gilbert Chesterton in the same journal, under the title "The Great Shawkspeare Mystery." With Shaw's rejoinder, the battle was on, and controversy over Shakespeare's merits continued to rage in the press for many years. Dramatists, scholars, critics, college professors, ministers took part in these engagements. Yet even now the general public imagines that Shaw considered himself a greater dramatist than Shakespeare, whom he classified as an intellectual pygmy.

The crisis was reached with Shaw's review of Irving's production of *Cymbeline* at the Lyceum, September 22, 1896. In Shaw's outburst of berserker rage occur these abandoned words:

With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his. The intensity of my impatience with him occasionally reaches such a pitch, that it would positively be a relief to me to dig him up and throw stones at him, knowing as I do how incapable he and his worshippers are of understanding any less obvious form of indignity.

With this review Shaw alienated not a few of his friends and ac-

quaintances, and quite naturally inspired the public opinion that Shaw was a man of colossal egoism. Henry Arthur Jones, Shaw's friend of many years standing, was so enraged that he published the following diatribe:

You would dig up Shakespeare and desecrate his dead remains, whose living words forever call upon England to know the greatness of her strength and to stamp her traitors under her foot, you would do this, you who delight to desecrate everything that, dead or living, commands the reverence of mankind? Will not they who do understand Shakespeare, all his lovers in all his England, join common cause with them who today behold us cankered with internal treason, and gathering themselves together upon Shakespeare's next birthday, dig you out, and throw stones at you, and hunt you all the way to Shakespeare's Cliff, and making it our Tarpeian Rock, fling you from its top, that Shakespeare's Land may be for ever purged of you?

In the character of his authorized biographer, I asked Shaw in 1929 the point-blank question: "Do you really mean to assert that Shakespeare was merely a derivative dramatist, and that you regard yourself his superior as a playwright and thinker?" Shaw answered in these words: "When I uttered this *boutade* (not to say blasphemy) I was really measuring Ibsen's mind against theirs [Homer, Shakespeare, Scott]. Nobody who does not remember the impact of Ibsen in England after 1889 can understand how devastatingly he knocked out his predecessor." And in the Postscript, dated 1931, to *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, Shaw stated, in regard to the effect of Ibsen on the European theatre: "Until then Shakespeare had been conventionally ranked as a giant among psychologists and philosophers. Ibsen dwarfed him so absurdly in those aspects that it became impossible for the moment to take him seriously as an intellectual force." In the whole Ibsen-Shaw-Shakespeare imbroglio, it is obligatory to realize that Shaw was not a critic in the accepted sense, but a crusader who laid about him violently in all directions against the unregenerate. This recusant's confession of impassioned partiality does not extenuate his critical apostasy. His exculpation is pure sophistry and ethically Jesuitical:

I only did what all critics do who are worth their salt. The critics who attacked Ibsen and defended Shakespeare whilst I was defending Ibsen and attacking Shakespeare; or who were acclaiming the reign of Irving at the Lyceum Theatre as the Antonine age of the Shakespearean drama whilst I was battering at it in open preparation for its subsequent downfall, were no more impartial than I.

In conclusion, may we not reasonably inquire what are Shaw's real opinions of Shakespeare? First off, we should bear in mind that Shaw is a free thinker of conspicuous originality and refractory temperament reacting strongly to mental and aesthetic stimuli. He was not a scholar in the academic sense and, until late in life, his reactions to Shakespeare were reflexes conditioned by the prejudices and prepossessions carried over from childhood and youth, and by his impressions derived directly from seeing performances, for the most part unsatisfying, of Shakespeare's plays. When my scholarly colleague, Felix Grendon, sent Shaw a copy of his essay, "Shakespeare and Shaw," forty-six years ago,

Shaw deprecatingly replied: "My criticism of Shakespear is too negative to be of much use except to discredit the senseless eulogies which are current."

In 1905 Shaw expressed, in the first of his twelve affirmations in the *London Daily News*, a view which, I feel sure, he has always entertained: "In manner and art nobody can write better than Shakespear, because, carelessness apart, he did the thing as well as it can be done within the limits of human faculty."

In coaching Ellen Terry for the role of Imogen in *Cymbeline*, which he found the most exasperating of any of Shakespeare's plays, Shaw wrote her a series of letters which are literary classics of criticism. So perturbed was he by Shakespeare's creation of two different characters in the person of Imogen that he actually wrote a credible ending for Shakespeare's play, which he titled "Cymbeline Refinished."

In *Hamlet* Shaw discerned at once the highest and the deepest of all of Shakespeare's plays—because Hamlet in crisis discovers that he is a Christian, and so, in his own nature, philosophically adumbrates the revolt of modern man against the obscurantist, conventional, filial "duty" of revenge. One of his observations, inspired by Forbes-Robertson's production of *Hamlet* in 1913, is startlingly revealing.

There is a sense in which Hamlet is insane, for he trips over the mistake which lies on the threshold of intellectual self-consciousness: that of bringing life to utilitarian or hedonistic tests, thus treating it as a means instead of an end. Because Polonius is a "foolish prating knave," because Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are snobs, he kills them remorselessly as he might kill a flea, showing that he has no real belief in the superstitious reason he gives for not killing himself, and in fact anticipating exactly the whole course of the intellectual history of Western Europe until Schopenhauer found the clue that Shakespear missed.

This clue, of course, was Schopenhauer's terrible concept of the *Wille zu leben*, a ruthless, savage force, immanent and irresistible. It was this predominant will which drove the devil's disciple to follow "the law of his own nature" and offer his life in the minister's stead. It was this immanent will which bade Hamlet to defy the *mores* of society, court, and contemporary morals and to refuse to commit the murder which false notions of "duty" commanded.

The task of writing *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* sent Shaw, at the age of sixty-five, back to a searching study of Shakespeare. And the conclusions which he expressed in the Preface to that play may be accepted as his definitive word on Shakespeare. Shaw was a race-betterer, a social meliorist, a wanderer in search of the Superman. His whole life was a New Pilgrim's Progress in search of a new Celestial City. As Edith Cavell said of patriotism, so said Shaw for the future: "Shakespear is not enough." We must not miss the clue which Shakespear missed. We must find it, perhaps, in a concept larger than Schopenhauer's Immanent Will: an *elan vital* of the soul, a Life Force to create the higher exemplar of the Superman: a Super-Shakespear.

Bernard Shaw and the Pall Mall Gazette: II

by Dan H. Laurence¹

To George Moore, "vain, ignorant, and totally unappreciative of other men's genius," in the opinion of at least one of his contemporaries, Shaw was merely "the funny man in a boarding house." When asked by Frank Harris for his opinion of Shaw, Moore replied: "You ask me to express opinions about Shaw, and his work, but I can only express opinions about writers whose aims are the same as mine and you know that Shaw and I have nothing in common." But Harris, ever persistent, finally elicited a more explicit statement from Moore: "Shaw is without any aestheticism whatsoever and being without any synthesis he cannot pursue a train of thought for more than a few lines and has then to contrive his escape in a joke; and it is strange that you have not yet perceived that his jokes are vulgar claptrap, the jokes of a clown in the pantomime." (*Moore vs. Harris*, Chicago, 1925.) It is certain that the art-for-art's-sake, "dedicated" Moore could never have understood or accepted Shaw's thesis: "My way of joking is to tell the truth. It's the funniest joke in the world." The trenchant humor of Shaw totally escaped him.

Just when Moore and Shaw first met is uncertain, but Shaw's first impression of Moore was that he was an incurable romantic. And if, as we presume, he met Moore in the early 1880's, he had every reason to adopt this view. For Moore, due to sudden impecuniosity, had just deserted the *vie de bohème* of Paris for the contrasting drabness of London, settling down to peddle tragic verse plays and decadent Baudelarian poetry, and to entertain his comrades with overly-Gallicized manners and "unpublished *quasi* autobiographical tales of adventure." It was not until 1883 that he published his first novel, *A Modern Lover*, which reflected strongly the naturalistic formula of Zola.

Shaw, in his memoir on William Archer, recalled his introduction to Moore as a fictionist thusly:

In the novel, which raises no question of [theatrical] technique, [Archer] welcomed the most uncompromising naturalness, making me read De Maupassant's *Une Vie*, applauding Zola, and coming into my rooms one day full of his discovery of a new novelist of our own, who had burst on the world with a naturalistic novel entitled *A Mummer's Wife* [1884]. I was so impressed with his account of it that I eagerly asked the name of the author; but when he told me it was George Moore I burst into irreverent laughter, knowing the said George personally as an inveterate romancer, whose crimson inventions, so far delivered orally for private circulation only, suggested that he had been brought into the world by a union of Victor Hugo with Ouida. But Archer insisted on my reading the book . . . and I stood rebuked for my incredulity.

That Shaw probably recalled the wrong book is suggested by the

1. Mr. Laurence, editor of *The Shaw Bulletin*, is a vice-president of the Shaw Society (London), and an instructor of English at Hofstra College. His identification and analysis of Shaw's unsigned writings in the *Pall Mall Gazette* began in the May 1954 number, and will be continued in subsequent issues.

statement that "a new novelist" had "burst on the world." Surely he would have known of Moore's earlier novel, whose challenging candour had provoked sharp protests and vehement attack in the press. Which novel Shaw read is, however, unimportant; what is more essential is that, on the strength of the evidence proffered by Archer, he claims to have "stood rebuked" for his "incredulity." By implication, his view of Moore as a "romancer" had vanished and a more enlightened view had arisen in its stead. The paucity of known Shavian comment on Moore's fiction writing has, until now, presented no occasion for challenging this latter day (1927) impression. But Shaw's opinion of Moore as a writer did not undergo the Saul of Tarsus lightning conversion he implies. The veracity of his statement is impugned by his own hand, in a significant review of Moore's novel, *A Mere Accident* (1887), which was later revised as "John Norton" in *Celibates* (1895). Shaw's unsigned critique, titled "Mr. George Moore's New Novel," appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 19, 1887 (p. 3).

To the reviewer the objection to Mr. Moore is "not that he is realistic, but that he is a romancer who, in order that he may take liberties, persuades himself that he is a pathologist." The novel concerns a clergyman's young daughter, about to be married, who is accosted on the road and raped, resulting in her madness and suicide. This, says Shaw, serves as an excuse for Mr. Moore to afford the reader one of his "sham clinical lectures on morbid sexual conditions." These discourses, not being truly realistic, "have no more claim on our forbearance than the gratuitously romantic passages in a shilling shocker." Mr. Moore, in a word, is a fraud. And what is worse, "there is no moral. The incident is described for its own sake." To Shaw, there is no question as to the propriety of introducing the subject—but there must be a valid purpose for doing so. The Shavian shock treatment is always purposeful. "It annoys me," Shaw once wrote, "to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable; and I insist on making them think in order to bring them to conviction of sin." The review of *A Mere Accident* reflects the impatience of the reformer who sees a good opportunity going to waste. For Moore to deal, as William Dean Howells iterated, with "the unupholstered human soul" was not enough, in Shaw's estimation; lacking a valid point was sufficient to classify Moore with "the vulgar novelists who depend for their effects on the mere sensation stirred up by any appalling crime or abnormal occurrence." *A Mere Accident*, which Shaw, more polite than Moore, refrained from calling "vulgar claptrap," was, in the final analysis, merely "licentious fiction." Shaw had not been converted by Archer after all; as he confided to Lady Gregory in 1923, his opinion was that "George Moore . . . though his success is a triumph of industry, never does homage to what is highest."

III. "Mr. George Moore's New Novel"

It is customary to say of such books as Mr. George Moore's that they are not *virginibus puerisque*. Yet the lasses and lads are the very people who read them—if they ever do read them—without being any the worse. Those who have been allowed the run of the library in their childhood know by experience that in young hands "Tom Jones" is as innocent as "The Pilgrim's Progress," and that "Mademoiselle de Maupin" is unreadably dull to little bookworms whose choice of literature is still

subject to the parental censorship. As to people old enough to insist on choosing for themselves, they are under no compulsion to read Mr. Moore's novels; and as his licence is now notorious, and his method not in the least insidious, it is only necessary, each time he publishes a book, to indicate plainly how far he has gone in it. Our readers can then decide for themselves whether the book is to be widely read or not; for Mr. Moore's existence as a novelist depends wholly on the general reader, and not on the particular reviewer.

The "mere accident" which gives the novel now in question its name is this. A young lady, a clergyman's daughter, about to be happily married, is overtaken on a lonely road by a tramp and outraged. Next day she goes mad, throws herself from a window, and dies. In describing this "realistically," Mr. Moore has not done his worst: by making the victim insensible, he has contrived to avoid the most painful moment of his narrative. From his point of view this is perhaps a sacrifice of principle—a flinching from his duty. From the point of view of the British public, it will be welcomed as a commendable reticence that might have been carried further, even to the point of not writing the book. For there is no moral. The incident is described for its own sake. It has no consequences or antecedents to recommend it; and unless Mr. Moore wished to bring home to us in a startling way the danger of allowing young ladies to go out without an escort, he must stoop to be classed with the vulgar novelists who depend for their effects on the mere sensation stirred up by any appalling crime or abnormal occurrence. In their school, the taste of the sensationalist author determines the particular crime selected; and Mr. Moore's ready preference for a rape is explained by the opportunity it affords him for one of his favourite sham clinical lectures on morbid sexual conditions. Let it be freely admitted that these discourses would, if truly realistic, have a scientific value sufficient to fortify Mr. Moore against prudish criticism. But as they are realistic only as symptoms of the condition of Mr. Moore's own imagination, which hardly deserves a set of volumes all to itself, they have no more claim on our forbearance than the gratuitously romantic passages in a shilling shocker. The objection, in fact, to Mr. Moore is not that he is realistic, but that he is a romancer who, in order that he may take liberties, persuades himself that he is a pathologist. Now, whilst there are people who like to take liberties, and other people who like to submit to them, they will be taken, and, within the due limits of personal freedom, must not be interfered with; but pray let us have no hypocritical pretence that they are disinterested researches in psychology or sociology. They are not even an acceptable protest against the evil of obscurantism; for their effect is really to reinforce it. The remedy for obscurantism is responsible scientific instruction, and not licentious fiction.

The workmanship of "A Mere Accident" can be most conveniently considered by calling a truce—a temporary truce—with Mr. Moore on the subject of his moral accountability. It has often been urged upon him that "fine writing" is his weak point. He evidently thinks it just the reverse; and he is right. To appeal to the intelligence, and lead it to convictions which become a permanent spring of emotion, is all very well for writers who can do it; but Mr. Moore's business is to strike the fancy and rouse the imagination with pictures and rhythms. Accordingly

he first "gets up" the needful Sussex scenery as if he were commissioned to write a guide book, and then he describes it thus:—

The country is as flat as a smooth sea. Chanetonbury Ring stands up like a mighty cliff on a northern shore: its crown of trees is grim. The abrupt ascents of Toddington Mount bear away to the left, and tide-like the fields flow up into the great gulf between.

That is not the landscape style of Bunyan, or Cobbett, or George Borrow; but it is the style of styles to serve Mr. Moore's turn; and he sticks to it wisely, and does it well. But when, inspired by Mr. Walter Pater, he applies the same method to mediaeval Latin, and pours out the result in twenty-page doses, the critic, detecting "cram," winks, and—unless he skips—even sleeps. Nor, despite his interest in the doctrine of heredity, is he disposed to admit the term "psychical investigation" as appropriate to a long explanation of the hero's temperament, in which "direct mingling of perfect health with spinal weakness had germinated into a marked yearning for the heroic ages—for the supernatural as contrasted with the meanness of the routine of existence." Pretentious fustian of this kind abounds in the book; but the persons of the story are none the less shrewdly sketched; for Mr. Moore, within his range, is no bad observer. It is a range peopled by drunkards and vagabonds, by the "average sensual man," the half educated, the morbidly adolescent, the provincial and ignorant gentry—in short, the unfit and inadequate for all noble parts in life. Among them there is not stuff enough to make a successful costermonger. Since they have their place among the many failures of our civilization, they must have their limner and chronicler. Only, one would fain meet some handsome and wholesome fellow-creature among them, if only as a standard to measure the shortcoming of the others. Here is Mr. Moore's own description of his hero:—

To the superficial, therefore, John Norton will appear but the incarnation of egotism and priggishness; but those who see deeper will have recognized that he is one who has suffered bitterly, as bitterly as the outcast who lies dead in his rags beneath the light of the policeman's lantern.

A couple of hundred pages or so of pseudo-psychological analysis of this gentleman's emotions will reconcile most readers to his sufferings. As to the young lady with "the delicate plenitudes of the bent neck bound with white cambric," in the author's most characteristic style, it need only be said that what there is natural of her is evidently drawn from an Irish model, and that it is not her fault that Mr. Moore did not find a better use for her.



The first literary contribution for which Shaw received remuneration was an unsigned essay, "Christian Names," which appeared in a short-lived periodical, *One and All*, for the week ending October 11, 1879. The editor who accepted the piece, for which Shaw happily pocketed the sum of fifteen shillings, was a young man barely in his thirties, George R. Sims. Shaw was fond of Sims, who, prior to his success as writer of the "Mustard and Cress" column in the *Referee*, under the pseu-

donym "Dagonet," and as playwright of pot-boiler melodramas, had written a sociological study, *How the Poor Live* (1883), and a series of articles in the *Daily News* on the housing of the poor, which aided in the arousing of public opinion, leading to the housing reform act of 1885. When, in 1887, Sims published a humorous tour-de-force, *Mary Jane's Memoirs*, purportedly the revelations of a back-stairs domestic, Shaw compounded the felony by writing a jocular review of the book, under a pseudonym of his own. His critique, "An Autobiography from the Kitchen," signed "By an English Mistress," appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 9, 1887 (p. 3). With gay abandon, Shaw "attacked" Sims on all flanks, playing with his pen-name, questioning his reputation on the grounds that he was "connected with the theatre" and "a contributor to papers which appear on Sunday," and sharply rebuking his blackguardism. It is amusing to sit in on the private joke and watch Shaw "demolish" his friend, safely ensconced all the while in the frame of experience of the matronly lady who is scandalized by the behavior of a member of the servant class and that of an obvious scoundrel of a journalist.

Shaw's pseudonym was one of many he was to adopt throughout his literary career. "The nomenclatory function is one which the greater number of individuals have occasion to exercise at least once in a lifetime," he had written in "Christian Names," but he exercised the function for himself with a frequency unshared by any literary figure before or after him, not excepting Thackeray. Some of his outrageous disguises were "Redbarn Wash" (a not too deceptive anagram), "Gregory Biesikoff," "Horatia Ribbonson," "Knifing Swimmingly," "George Bunard," and "Amelia Mackintosh." On one occasion he appended to a letter to the press, on the subject of ape-gland transplanting, the pseudonym "Consul Jr.," which happened to be the name of a renowned performing chimpanzee in the Regent's Park zoo. He was also, by turn, when occasion seemed to demand it, "An Inveterate Gambler," a suicidal lunatic—and Napoleon!

IV. "An Autobiography from the Kitchen" By an English Mistress

In this book a domestic servant has so far forgotten herself as to write descriptions of the family life she has been permitted to share; and she has unfortunately prevailed upon a man of letters to assist her in publishing them. Of the society in which Mr. Sims moves I, of course, know nothing. I am told by the young gentlemen with whom my daughters bring me in contact that he is a well-known man, that he is connected with the theatre, that he is a contributor to papers which appear on Sunday, that the information concerning his domestic affairs contained in his own writings is not considered trustworthy, and that his real name is not Sims but Dagonet. Such general statements as to a public man are not sufficiently precise to warrant me in criticising his fitness for a literary task of peculiar delicacy; but I may at least say, while making every allowance for the influence of circumstances upon character, that I hardly think any one will recognize in Mr. Sims exactly the adviser for a girl like Mary Jane Buffham, who was, I believe, by nature an industrious and respectable housemaid. Unhappily she was egotistical and indiscreet, and not honest enough to perceive

that in sitting up at night to write her memoirs she was misappropriating time purchased by her employers; making use of family matters which in no sense belonged to her; and wasting not only gas and coals, but also the health and strength needed for the efficient discharge of her duties. When she brought her manuscript to Mr. Sims, he seems to have seen nothing reprehensible in it except its untidiness. It was his plain duty to have detained the packet and sent it to the various persons whom it concerned, partly as a warning to them to be careful of taking their servants too far into their confidence, partly that they might have the satisfaction of perfect certainty as to its destruction. Instead of this, he thoughtlessly praised the work; encouraged Buffham; and published her disclosures with her photograph as a frontispiece. From his conduct when she called on him—which she would hardly have ventured to do if on previous occasions he had kept her at a proper distance—we may learn, I think, something as to the man himself. On hearing her knock, he opened the door in person, a thing which no gentleman should ever do. I had rather give the sequel in Mr. Sims's own words:—

I found myself face to face with a neatly dressed young woman of about eight-and-twenty, whom I at once recognized as a girl who had been in the service of a member of my family for a short time. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for calling," said the girl, colouring up to the eyes. "I beg your pardon; but—er—could I speak to you for a moment alone?" There was nobody else on the doorstep; but I understood what the girl meant. She wished our conversation to be less public. "Certainly," I replied: "come into my study."

I do not for a moment suggest that Mr. Sims meant any harm; but the request was improper, and the compliance reckless beyond all excuse.

It is difficult to criticise Buffham's narrative without widening the effect of her breach of confidence by further publicity. It is due to her to say that she was unfortunate at first in her choice of situations, falling, as she did, into the houses of dipsomaniacs, common lunatics, and, on one occasion, into that of an author. Not that I am so prejudiced or so old-fashioned as to believe that professional authors are necessarily inferior to persons in the steadier and more reputable walks of life; but it is a matter of common report that their habits are unsuited to the strict household order which trains good servants; and Buffham's misplaced literary ambition might never have overcome her had she been fortunate enough to escape such influences. Apart from her scribbling propensities, she seems—naturally giving a favourable account of herself—to have been a sober young woman, and as industrious as persons of her class ever are. Her faults were curiosity, indiscretion, occasional untruthfulness, and want of reticence with policemen and other persons with whom her duties made her acquainted. Since the mischief done by the publication of her memoirs is now irrevocable, ladies may be recommended to read them for the sake of the light they throw upon the feelings and habits of the kitchen class. I am not sure that they will not soon be out of date: housemaids of Buffham's type are certainly less common than they were within my recollection, but for the present her views are, in the main, fairly representative.

Mr. Sims (*soi-disant*) has not seen fit to chasten or correct the poor girl's phraseology; and I must add that his own style might with advantage be made somewhat less familiar.

Shaw in Academe

by William D. Chase¹

A review of **Men and Supermen. The Shavian Portrait Gallery.** By Arthur H. Nethercot. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1954. \$5.00.

And now, the story being written, I proceed to speculate on what it means . . .

— The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God

Writing a book whose readership is almost certainly limited to persons who have not only read most or all of Bernard Shaw's plays and novels, but who intend to re-read them, must have its own rewards quite apart from any expectation of the fame or fortune of the best-seller market. It is lucky that Professor Arthur H. Nethercot, of the Northwestern University English Department, was not dissuaded from his undertaking by such Shavian considerations, for we should have been deprived of one of the most perspicacious studies of Shaw's work to emerge from the maze of critiques and commentaries concerning G.B.S.

In his "Preface on Ventriloquism," Professor Nethercot indicates that his study is primarily "an interpretive, analytical and sometimes critical guide to the portrait gallery of the most distinguished playwright of his long generation." A second, inescapable pursuit, in which he obviously delights, is the deadly paralleling of previous criticism — perhaps best illustrated in the section "The Truth about Candida." Here we are treated to contradiction after contradiction, confusion after confusion, in a welter of half truths. And in the end we shall very likely conclude that many of Shaw's characters have completely eluded the critics. Shaw's projections of character on separate but simultaneous levels of meaning are emphasized in these critical comparisons. And, to add to our doubts, Professor Nethercot loses no time in pointing out Shaw's own insistence that great artists do not necessarily possess a rational understanding of their own meanings.

Professor Nethercot asks: "Are there easily recognizable and constantly repeated types, classifications, and categories of people in [Shaw's] fictional works? And if there are, are these works any the less valid and permanent for that reason?" *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, "a key to the ideas of Bernard Shaw," provides his "basic divisions of human beings, divisions which, later expanded and elaborated upon, were to mark his dramatis personae to the end of his career." Upon the validity of these basic divisions rests much of the value of Professor Nethercot's study.

Having briefly disposed of Shaw's two types of reformer — the indulgence preacher and the abstinence preacher — he begins his analysis of Shaw's "partition of mankind into three types: the idealists, the realists, and the Philistines." Here the difficulty begins.

1. Mr. Chase, a founder and Secretary of The Shaw Society of America, is Book Review Editor of *The Flint (Michigan) Journal*, and a partner in The Apple Tree Press, which recently published *G. Bernard Shaw: Last Will and Testament*.

The determination of the proper assignment of each individual to his type depends on his use or rejection of masks to hide the face of the truth, which many fear to confront. These masks are our so-called "ideals," and those who refuse to look at anything but them are "idealists." The person who insists on tearing off these masks, in order to expose the reality underneath, is the realist. And the satisfied persons, who neither erect masks nor bother themselves about realities, but vegetate contentedly as they are, are the Philistines.

Professor Nethercot notices the difficulty which Shaw's terminology presents ("Shaw's use of these terms 'idealist' and 'idealism' has worried some of his critics.") and he points out Shaw's experimentation with other terms. But, perhaps wisely, in spite of these semantic pitfalls, he sticks to Shaw's original categories. "Idealism, conventionalism, idolatry, romance, illusion, traditionalism, prejudice — they are all the same; they are all the Enemy," says Professor Nethercot. It is unfortunate that, in spite of his neat explanation of how to recognize the enemy, the enemy simply doesn't always lend himself to such neat classification.

Here are some of the groups. **PHILISTINES:** John Hoskyn, *Love Among the Artists*; Bompas, *How He Lied to Her Husband*; Alastair Fitzfassenden, *The Millionaire*; Reginald Bridgenorth, *Getting Married*; Johnny Tarleton, *Misalliance*; Major Petkoff, *Arms and the Man*; Chaplain de Stogumber, *Saint Joan*. **IDEALISTS:** Jim Vesey, *Immaturity*; Adrian Herbert, *Love Among the Artists*; Marian Lind, *The Irrational Knot*; William de Burgh Cokane, Sartorius and Lickcheese, *Widowers' Houses*; Boss Mangan, *Heartbreak House*; Roebuck Ramsden and the Devil - Mendoza, *Man and Superman*. **REALISTS:** Robert Smith, Harriett Russell and Lady Geraldine Porter, *Immaturity*; Sidney Trefusis, Edward Conolly, and Elinor McQuinch, *The Irrational Knot*; Captain Bluntschli and Nicola, *Arms and the Man*; Andrew Undershaft, *Major Barbara*; John Tanner, *Man and Superman*.

The inconvenience of categorizing people, even the characters invented by the creator of this terminology, is apparent in Professor Nethercot's frequent qualifying statements: ". . . Trench, it is true, does become a selfish, cynical, half-way realist . . ."; "Charteris, in *The Philanderer*, is something of a problem"; "Dubedat himself, incidentally, is also something of an idealist . . ."; "Louka . . . in her streaks of realism . . ." People, and characters, seldom remain long in one camp. But Shaw has made his bed, and now Professor Nethercot chooses to lie in it.

However, classification, once begun, can scarcely be contained on the level of Philistines, idealists, and realists alone. Cross-sections of the apple may be made from any angle, and the Professor does not miss many. We find vast compartments containing specimens of the womanly woman, the pursuing woman, the younger generation, the manly woman, the new man, the philanderer, Englishmen, Irishmen, Jews, Americans, Germans, Slavs, doctors, lawyers, soldiers and sailors, teachers, journalists and critics, priests, politicians (conservatives, liberals, democrats, socialists, laborites, communists, feminists, dictators), and the superman. Here, of course, Professor Nethercot has done tremendous spade work for the student of Shaw, the article writer, and

the public speaker. One can now select, for use as needed, a womanly woman, a feminist, a doctor, a conservative politician, and so on.

It is certainly not the mechanics of classification that constitutes his major contribution, but rather the cogent and understanding review of Shaw's development through a long lifetime of character creation. The search for fortifying information has led the author through a staggering volume of biographical and critical writings, through most of Shaw's major writings, and many obscure and unpublished documents. Whether his classification of Shaw's characters is in every case meaningful is of less importance than the fact that Professor Nethercot has, through his synthesis of criticism (Shaw's included), and through his own wise and incisive observations, unquestionably thrown new light on our playwright. Professor Nethercot writes with clarity and wit, and he demonstrates a deep understanding of Shaw.

It was inevitable that the academicians should have seized the works of the arch anti-academicist. Shaw saw in this a hazard he could not long escape. Professor Nethercot's assignment might have horrified G.B.S., but his execution of it is precise and meaningful. While it was not intended, and could not be recommended, in lieu of Shaw's own writings, it will find an eager and appreciative audience among the Shavian experts.



A Continuing Check-List of Shaviana

I. Works by Shaw

EXTRACT FROM EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON CENSORSHIP (1909), in *The Oxford Book of English Talk*, ed. James Sutherland. Oxford, 1953.

SHAW'S LETTERS TO ELLEN TERRY, in *The Literary Repository* (catalogue of J. Stevens Cox, Beaminstor, England). No. 2 (1954). Two new letters.

II. Shaviana - Books

Brown, John Mason: *AS THEY APPEAR*. New York, 1952. Contains four chapters on Shaw, reprinted from the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

Gassner, John: *THE THEATRE IN OUR TIMES*. New York, 1954. Contains four chapters on Shaw.

Green, Paul: *DRAMATIC HERITAGE*. New York, 1953. Contains "Mystical Bernard Shaw."

Krutch, Joseph Wood: "MODERNISM" IN MODERN DRAMA. Ithaca, N. Y., 1953. Criticism of Shaw's destructive influence as one of a group of dramatists who have brought us theatrically "to something like intellectual and moral paralysis."

Nathan, George Jean: *THE THEATRE IN THE FIFTIES*. New York, 1953. Contains "Bernard Shaw" and "Shaw and His Actresses."

III. Shaviana - Periodicals

Fisher, Desmond M.: "Shaw's Other Dustman in Dublin," *American Mercury*, March, 1954.

Holberg, Stanley M.: "The Economic Rogue in the Plays of Bernard Shaw," *University of Buffalo Studies*, XXI, No. 2 (1953). Abridged M. A. thesis.

Krim, Seymour: "Shaw, the Man Behind the Mask," *Commonweal*, November 6, 1953.

Krutch, Joseph Wood: "Why Not 'Methuselah'?" *Theatre Arts*, June, 1954. A plea for a "reading" performance.

Stokes, Sewell: "Shaw, Frank Harris and Saint Joan," *John O' London's Weekly*, May 28, 1954.

West, E. J.: "Hollywood and Mr. Shaw," *Educational Theatre Journal*, October, 1953. Sub-titled "Some Reflections on Shavian Drama-into-Cinema."

Shaw on the Joyce He Scarcely Read

by William Hull¹

Shaw and Joyce, the two protesting exiles from Dublin, have in common a strenuous moral urgency: the Joyce who through Stephen Dedalus declared his mission the forging of the conscience of his race; and the Shaw who declared in the preface to *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*:

My reputation has been gained by my persistent struggle to force the public to reconsider its morals . . . I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions in these matters. I have no other effectual incentive to write plays . . . If I were prevented from producing immoral and heretical plays, I should cease to write for the theatre, and propagate my views from the platform and through books.

The Swift temper impales them in common, but the word "propagate" reveals a way removed by chasm from young Stephen's ideal of objective creation, of the artist remote as God creatant and paring his fingernails. This is the eternally fixed gulf between the preacher-agitator and the artist; yet Shaw built for himself a highly negotiable bridge across. Perhaps he could have felt more comfortable with *Dubliners* than with *Ulysses*. Of the book of stories Joyce wrote Grant Richards:

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the center of paralysis . . . I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do more than this. I cannot alter what I have written. [Gorman, James Joyce; New York, 1939, p. 150.]

The tempers in Joyce that seem alien to Shaw are of St. Augustine, Dante, Aquinas, Blake, and Flaubert. The shared great enthusiasms are Shakespeare and Ibsen, as the great shared revulsion is Dublin.

In late 1921 or early 1922 Shaw responded to a prospectus sent by Sylvia Beach of Shakespeare and Company, soliciting a subscription for the first printing of *Ulysses*. The first copy came off the press February 2, 1922. Of the edition 100 copies were deluxe, signed; 150 sold for 250 francs; the other 750 for 150 francs. Shaw's letter, written from 10 Adelphi Terrace, London (no date), is addressed to Miss Beach in Paris:²

1. Dr. Hull, Associate Professor of Humanities at Hofstra College, is the author of *Saul at Endor* and *Selected Poems: 1942-1952*, and has published numerous critical articles and poems in the literary monthlies.

2. First published by David Dempsey (who credited his find to a London exhibit of Joyceana) in the *New York Times Book Review*, July 23, 1950. A typescript of the letter in the National Library of Ireland contains a passage expunged by Mr. Dempsey, which is reinstated here in brackets.

Dear Madam,

I have read several fragments of *Ulysses* in its serial form. It is a revolting record of a disgusting phase of civilization; but it is a truthful one; and I should like to put a cordon round Dublin; round up every male person in it between the ages of 15 and 30; force them to read it; and ask them whether on reflection they could see anything amusing in all that foul mouthed, foul minded derision and obscenity. To you, possibly, it may appeal as art: you are probably (you see I don't know you) a young barbarian beglamoured by the excitements and enthusiasms that art stirs up in passionate material; but to me it is all hideously real: I have walked those streets and know those shops and have heard and taken part in those conversations. I escaped from them to England at the age of twenty; and forty years later have learnt from the books of Mr. Joyce that Dublin is still what it was, and young men are still drivelling in slackjawed blackguardism just as they were in 1870. It is, however, some consolation to find that at last somebody has felt deeply enough about it to face the horror of writing it all down and using his literary genius to force people to face it. [In Ireland they try to make a cat cleanly by rubbing its nose in its own filth. Mr. Joyce has tried the same treatment on the human subject. I hope it may prove successful.

I am aware that there are other qualities and other passages in *Ulysses*; but they do not call for any special comment from me.]

I must add, as the prospectus implies an invitation to purchase, that I am an elderly Irish gentleman, and that if you imagine that any Irishman, much less an elderly one, would pay 150 francs for a book, you little know my countrymen.

Faithfully,

G. Bernard Shaw

Mr. Dempsey also recorded, from a letter to Robert McAlmon, Joyce's comment on this: "I think I can read clearly (with the one good eye I have) between the lines. I would also take a small bet (up to 4.75 francs) that the writer has subscribed anonymously for a copy of *Ulysses* through some bookseller."

Shaw saw his fragments in the *Little Review*, where the first 14 episodes were serialized, with cuts, from 1918 until, in the fall of 1920, the New York Society for the Prevention of Vice prosecuted the two amiable editresses for peddling obscenity, and fined and fingerprinted them. The United States Post Office had already seized three earlier issues. Shaw's reference to "the books of Mr. Joyce" is puzzling. Though he had perhaps seen two plays, there is no evidence he had read *Dubliners* or *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as there is none that he later read *Ulysses*. There is a curious sentence in a letter from Ezra Pound in Paris to H. L. Mencken, March 22, 1922: "Shaw now writes to me twice a week complaining of the high price of *Ulysses*" (*The Letters of Ezra Pound*; New York, 1950, p. 174). Pound had probably, in his way, been pressing Shaw to buy the book and push Joyce.

In the spring of 1924 Shaw talked to Archibald Henderson about Joyce:

When they asked me to pay three guineas for "*Ulysses*" I said I would not go a penny beyond seven and sixpence. I read scraps of it in *The Little Review*, not knowing that they all belonged to the history of a single day in Dublin. I was attracted to it by the fact that I was once a young man in Dublin, and also by Joyce's literary power, which is of classic quality. I do not see why there should be any limit to frankness in sex revelation; but Joyce does

not raise that question. The question he does raise is whether there should be any limit to the use in literature of blackguardly language. It depends on what people will stand . . .

I could not write the words Mr. Joyce uses: my prudish hand would refuse to form the letters; and I can find no interest in his infantile clinical incontinences, or in the flatulations he thinks worth mentioning. But if they were worth mentioning I should not object to mentioning them, though, as you see, I should dress up his popular locutions in a little Latinity. For all we know they may be peppered freely over the pages of the lady novelists of ten years hence; and Frank Harris' autobiography may be on all the bookstalls . . . Mr. Harris does not really give himself away as completely as St. Augustine or Bunyan.

Is any treatment of sex in the interest of public morals? Most of the people who denounce "Ulysses" would say no if they would think out their own position; and that answer would at once reduce them to absurdity. "Ulysses" is a document, the outcome of a passion for documentation that is as fundamental as the artistic passion—more so, in fact; for the document is the root and stem of which the artistic fancy-works are the flowers. Joyce is driven by his documentary *daimon* to place on record the working of a young man's imagination for a single day in the environment of Dublin. The question is, is the document authentic? If I, having read some scraps of it, reply that I am afraid it is, then you may rise up and demand that Dublin be razed to the ground and its foundations sown with salt. And I may say do so by all means. But that does not invalidate the document.

The Dublin "jackeens" of my day, the medical students, the young bloods about town, were very like that. Their conversation was dirty; and it defiled their sexuality, which might just as easily have been held up to them as poetic and vital. I should like to organize the young men of Dublin into clubs for the purpose of reading "Ulysses," so that they should debate the question "Are we like that?" and if the vote were in the affirmative, proceed to the further question: "Shall we remain like that?" which would, I hope, be answered in the negative. You cannot carry out moral sanitation, any more than physical sanitation, without indecent exposures. Get rid of the ribaldry that Joyce describes and dramatizes, and what you object to in "Ulysses" will have no more interest than a twelfth-century map of the world has today. Suppress the book, leaving the ribaldry unexposed; and you are protecting dirt instead of protecting morals. If a man holds up a mirror to your nature and shows you that it needs washing—not white-washing—it is no use breaking the mirror. Go for soap and water. [Henderson, *Table-Talk of G.B.S.*; London, 1925, pp. 128-34.]

So the "scraps" Shaw has read have left him confident that *Ulysses* is Stephen's stream of consciousness. This suggests almost certainly that he had not read the *Portrait of the Artist*.

Louis Golding, in his *James Joyce* (London, 1933, pp. 168-9), used parts of this conversation in an apparently deliberate effort to distort Shaw's attitude to *Ulysses*. Note the additions, which I have indicated in black-letter type:

[Shaw] told his official biographer, "I could not write the words Mr. Joyce uses: my prudish hand would refuse to form the letters; and I can find no interest in his infantile clinical incontinencies [sic], or in the flatulations which he thinks worth mentioning." **He threw his copy of Ulysses into the fire. "It only proves that Dublin men and boys are as incorrigibly filthy-minded now as they were in my youth.** The Dublin 'jackeens' of my day, the medical students, the young bloods about town, were very like that. Their conversation was dirty; and it defiled their sexuality, which might just as easily have been held up to them as poetic and vital."

Shaw, still concerned with the three guinea price, used Joyce rather unfairly in a letter to Frank Harris, March 3, 1930:

Also you can write an autobiography, as St. Augustine did, as Rousseau did, as Casanova did, as you yourself have done . . . A man cannot take a libel action against himself; and if he is prepared to face obloquy, and compromises no one except himself and the dead, he may even get a sort of Riviera circulation in highly priced top shelf volumes with George Moore and James Joyce. [Harris, *Bernard Shaw*; New York, 1931, p. xiv.]

In the preface to *Immaturity*, 1930, Shaw again mentions Joyce:

In 1876 I had had enough of Dublin. James Joyce in his *Ulysses* has described, with a fidelity so ruthless that the book is hardly bearable, the life that Dublin offers to its young men, or, if you prefer to put it the other way, that its young men offer to Dublin. No doubt it is much like the life of young men everywhere in modern urban civilization. A certain flippant futile derision and belittlement that confuses the noble and serious with the base and ludicrous seems to me peculiar to Dublin . . .

A statement in late 1939 or 1940, attributed to Shaw by Stephen Winsten, raises some questions: "When I was on the Stage Society, James Joyce sent in his plays, and he always felt that they were not complete without a really good obscene act. That kind of thing bores me to tears." (*Days with Bernard Shaw*; New York, 1949, p. 129.)

The answer may lie in Winsten's known inaccuracy (Mr. Dan Laurence tells me that Shaw's copy of Winsten's book at Ayot St. Lawrence is heavy with marginal refutations). Joyce wrote only three plays. The first, a rough draft of a verse play sent nowhere, is lost, as is the second, *A Brilliant Career*, in 5 acts, which was sent to William Archer shortly after the 18 year old Joyce had published in the *Fortnightly Review* (April, 1900) his article on Ibsen's new play, translated by Archer, *When We Dead Awaken*. Archer may have shown the play to Shaw. The letter accompanying the return of the ms. to Joyce refers to "gigantic breadth of treatment" (Gorman, p. 68); this may be Archer's equivalent for obscenity. Joyce heard in 1918 that Sturge Moore of the London Stage Society was contemplating a production of his *Exiles*, printed in England that year, but Joyce never submitted the play to the Society.

The youngster who learned Norwegian to read Ibsen, who translated Hauptmann and struggled to Europeanize the Irish theatre was interested in Shaw, but the present record is rather scant. In 1909 when Yeats and Lady Gregory staged *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* amid much local excitement, Joyce was in Dublin under commission to write some Irish articles for his friend Prezioso, editor of the *Piccolo della Sera* in Trieste. Richard Ellman, Joyce's latest biographer, says he went with intense interest to the first night, August 25. (*Kenyon Review*, Summer, 1954, p. 362); his account of the evening was published in the Italian paper. [Joyce's article will be published in translation for the first time in the January 1955 issue of *The Shaw Bulletin*—Ed.]

In Zurich in 1918 Joyce acted as co-producer and business manager of the English Players, organized to present plays to offset local German propaganda. The second production, likely chosen by Joyce, offered

The Twelve Pound Look, Riders to the Sea, and The Dark Lady of the Sonnets. The program notes were written by Joyce:

Mr. Shaw here presents three orthodox figures—a virgin queen, a Shakespeare sober at midnight and a free giver of gold and the darkhaired maid of honour, Mary Fitton, discovered in the eighties by Thomas Tyler and Mr. Harris. Shakespeare comes to Whitehall to meet her and learns from a well-languaged beefeater that Mr. W. H. has forestalled him. The poet vents his spleen on the first woman who passes. It is the queen and she seems not loth to be accosted. She orders the maid of honour out of the way. When Shakespeare, however, begs her to endow his theatre she refers him with fine cruelty to her lord treasurer and leaves him. The most regicide of playwrights prays God to save her and goes home weighing against a lightened purse, love's treason, an old queen's leer and the evil eye of a government official, a horror still to come. [Gorman, pp. 258-9]

This performance occurred on June 17, 1918, at the Pfauentheater. On September 30, again through Joyce's efforts, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was produced, causing much comment but no attack.

In *Finnegans Wake* Wilde and Shaw are used as variants of the brother-opposites of which Sterne and Swift are the major literary form. Joyce perhaps takes a sly revenge in the Schoolroom scene. There are listed 7 Irish writers, as the 7 champions of Christendom, correlated with the 7 Force Centers of the Fire Serpentine. The physiological organ identified with the character "Pshaw" is named— and this might have delighted Shaw—in "a little Latinity."



Meeting Notes

The season's final meeting was held at the Grolier Club on May 18th, with Felix Grendon in the Chair. The subject of the evening was the love episode that highlights the correspondence between Bernard Shaw and Stella, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Mr. Grendon introduced the speaker, Maxwell Steinhardt, as a lifelong student of Shaw, and a lover, "this side idolatry," of the dramatist's work and personality.

Among the oldest and dullest of the anti-Shavian myths is the one that pictures Shaw as sexually frigid, and then uses this baseless piece of guesswork to spin a cobweb theory of Shaw's inability to understand the psychology of women in or out of love. The victims of this delusion nearly always state, with the utmost assurance, that Shaw was constitutionally incapable of intimate relations with women, that he was nothing but an epistolary lover, and that all his famous romances, such as the one with Ellen Terry, were conducted "only on paper."

Mr. Steinhardt pulverised this childish myth by allowing the letters to speak for themselves and to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the foremost actress of her day and the greatest dramatist of modern times were deeply in love and that the affair had its flesh and blood aspects as well as its elements of heart and soul. Mr. Steinhardt established the emotional side of his case by a judicious choice of excerpts: "I feel it in the roots of my nerves and in the marrow of my bones," writes Shaw of his passion on one occasion. When Stella asks her Joey (Shaw) whether he still loves her, he replies, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes . . . yes a million times!" Again, he calls himself "a lad playing with you on the mountains and unable to feel where you begin and I leave off." And he adds, "If you tell me that you feel like that, the sky will not be

high enough for me!!!” Poetry, doggerel, blarney, and baby talk—Shaw bombarded her with all these attentions three or four times a week as a safety valve for his passionate feelings. Mr. Steinhardt did not neglect the Campbell letters. But though her letters never attain the lyrical vehemence of his “Song of Songs,” no analyst would think of describing the turbulent emotion they betray as “merely epistolary.”

But, since actions speak louder than correspondence, Mr. Steinhardt, with great skill and charm, brought in enough historical or background comment to corroborate what the letters only hinted at, so that we learnt how the two principals actually behaved, and why, in their case too, the course of true love never did run smooth. The romance began in 1912, when Shaw, wanting Stella for the part of Eliza, “the flower-girl slut,” read his *Pygmalion* to her in the house of a friend. It was then that he first captured her imagination and lost his own heart. He promptly confided to Ellen Terry that he was in the seventh heaven of happiness. But the glowing idealism of rapturous love was soon in sharp conflict with the cool reality of everyday claims. Love or no love, Shaw needed a famous actress to make his new play a go; love or no love, Stella needed a famous husband to secure her social and professional future.

For these thorny problems there was no easy solution. Stella would neither kiss nor play without a wedding ring. Shaw would not consent to win Stella’s favors by divorcing his wife. The Stella-Joey drama reached a point where she ran away to the Isle of Wight to tantalize him; and he, reversing the technique of his own Don Juan-Tanner, ran after her, his sole excuse being that he *had* to see her “most frightfully.” A climax came when he went to her hotel room and she slammed the door in his face. After this repulse Shaw’s ardor cooled, and he ticketed the episode as *her* greatest victory and *his* greatest defeat. Events proved that it was the other way round. Stella was a much too discerning artist to give up the role of the guttersnipe Eliza, who learns to speak like a Duchess and carry herself like a queen. And though she made the rehearsals of *Pygmalion* a hell on earth for Shaw, she gave full swing to her fascinating artistry on the opening night. The play was an almost fantastic success, which carried Shaw’s fame to the ends of the earth. But he never wrote another play for Stella. And, as Mr Steinhardt pointed out, from that day forth Shaw’s prestige mounted steadily, while Stella’s as steadily declined.

The talk was followed by a discussion so animated and instructive that it was a tribute alike to our thoughtful speaker and to the audience he had set thinking. The congenial atmosphere of the Grolier club-room—we owe the room to Mr. Steinhardt’s generosity—tempted speakers to roam far afield. Even legal questions about Shaw’s will came on the carpet, and David Marshall Holtzmann, the Society’s lawyer, was always prompt with a professional answer. The women members frequently forced the pace. Miss Ada Lewis, who had talked with Shaw in England, and Mrs. Roberta Bushell Ridalin, who had met him on an historic occasion in New York, gave us vivid impressions of the great man. Clearly, the May meeting was a most edifying and enjoyable one.

—Felix Grendon

Theatre Notes

Strawhat Shaw

Once again that American phenomenon, the summer barn theatre, is upon us and, as any good Shavian knows, if there's a theatrical buck to be made, Shaw will be in on it. And in on it, this year, he is—with a vengeance. For, lo, thirty-one different productions of fifteen Shaw plays have emerged all over this sprawling continent. Shaw in Boiling Springs, Barnesville, and Binghampton. Shaw in Sharon, Stockbridge, and Saranac. Shaw in Olney and Orleans, in Woodstock and Westport, in Columbus and Cragmoor. Name your town — any town — and you'll find Shaw the omnipotent, Shaw the ubiquitous. The plays? Well, they range from the apprentice *Widower's Houses*, through *Arms and the Man* and *Major Barbara*, to the septuagenarian effort, *Too True to Be Good*. The Shavian landslide tempts us to mull over the 1905 pronouncement of Mr. Mencken: "That Shaw will ever become a popular dramatist, in the sense that Sardou and Pinero are popular, seems to be beyond all probability." But who is Sardou? And where, oh, where has Pinero gone?

The most significant production of the season is that of *Too True to Be Good*, starring Zachary Scott as Aubrey, and his wife, Ruth Ford, as the Patient. Mr. Scott advised us that, should the play succeed, he would bring it to Broadway in the fall. Its opening week at Philadelphia's Playhouse-in-the-Park, followed by a tour of the summer circuit, suggests that Mr. Scott may have a winter's occupation. Although unevenly cast, and ineptly trimmed by Albert Marre (too much of the first act is gone — and too little of the second and third), the production was swift-paced, buoyant, and outrageously funny. Much of the latter quality must be credited to the facetious portrayal of Private Meek (Shaw's satire on Lawrence of Arabia) by the erstwhile musical comedy juvenile, George Hall. But Mr. Scott made a debonair, insouciant Burglar and Miss Ford, by turn, a properly spoiled and convention-free daughter of a tiresome old mother, flutterishly played by veteran Dorothy Sands. The Elder of Francis Compton was an awesome delineation, and the Sweetie of Jan Ferrand richly comical, though her elimination of the cockney dialect caused Sweetie to be too much the lady to start with to be funny in her impersonation of a countess. Not unexpectedly, the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* reviewer upheld the tradition of his tribe by labelling the play an "amusing little trifle" and reporting that "a hard-working and spirited cast made a greater contribution to the success of the evening than did Shaw," though failing to explain how the cast elicited several hundred hearty guffaws from the audience, lacking as they did any co-operation from the author. In any event, *Variety* headlined the good news: "Shaw's 'True' a Sleeper 12G, Philly." The combination of Shaw and the Independence Day holiday was figured, it reported, "as giving 'Too True' an insurmountable handicap," but "to the surprise of some wiseacres" the play grossed a healthy \$12,000—at a \$2.40 top.

The news was just as bright from Stockbridge, where *Pygmalion* broke the Shaw record set the previous year by *You Never Can Tell*. This was just one of ten *Pygmalion* productions scheduled for the barns—

and hardly the best. Shepperd Strudwick made a winning if un-Shavian Higgins, but Francesca Bruning's Eliza was too broad an interpretation, resulting almost in a caricature of Shaw's effervescent heroine. The interpretation of Judith Evelyn at the Ivy Tower Playhouse (Spring Lake, N. J.) was considerably better, though a trifle austere in later scenes.

At Westport, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* received one of its rare mountings, making what we believe to be its first professional production locally since the 49 performances it chalked up at the Neighborhood Playhouse in 1923. As Shaw himself noted, "This little play is really a religious tract in dramatic form." Too bad director Joseph Anthony (lately kudosed for his *Bullfight*) wasn't apprised of this fact. His production was stylized in the manner of the recent film, *Red Garters*, with Jean Stapleton (nominally playing Hannah) making the season's only appearance of Annie Oakley in a Shaw play, and Ruth Ford, less successful than in her *Too True* romp of a fortnight later, swaggering through the play as a "Pore Jud" nightmare in her characterization of Feemy. Zachary Scott's Blanco was, by contrast, a moving depiction of a man who feels himself trapped by the God he has rejected, and he admirably sustained the role through its shifts of mood until the climactic sermon, which was too strident. Here he'd have done well to recall his simple, luminous speech to God in *The Southerner*. As the Elder, Alexander Clark was a convincing vis-a-vis, but the rest of the troupe foiled any efforts of Shaw to provide his audience with a stirring religious experience.

Contrariwise, the Bucks County Playhouse production of *Fanny's First Play*, not seen hereabouts (if memory serves) since the Shuberts offered it initially in New York in September, 1912, was, except for a static prologue and epilogue, effectively staged and uniformly well acted. The induction tended to drag, since most of the audience was uninitiated in the matter of Shaw's satirizing of his fellow critics, Walkley, Bangham, Cannan, and Swaffer, but once the curtain rose on the first act the laughter swelled to heartwarming proportions. Terence Kilburn and Dolores Mann made the rebellious youngsters credible and winsome, struggling valiantly against the stuffy moralities and intellectual zombism of their tiresome parents, expertly depicted by Jerome Cowan and Judith Elder as the Knoxes and Nydia Westman and Neil Fitzgerald as the Gilbeys. Patricia Englund as the amoral, warm-hearted street-walker and David Orrick (replacing the ailing Philip Bourneuf on a single day's notice) as the poker-faced Duke's-brother-turned-butler were additional assets to a spirited production. Our only sour glance is reserved for the brace of journalists who termed the play, respectively, "a strictly summer fillip" and "a tiresome Shavian trifle."

Exigencies of space thwart further comment, but the record should note barn productions of *Saint Joan*, *Candida*, *Getting Married*, *Misalliance*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, and *Heartbreak House* in addition to the plays aforementioned. *Major Barbara*, starring Karen Morley, at the Greenwich Mews Theatre, New York, may still be on the boards when this note reaches you. It's worth a visit.

—Flawner Bannal, Jr.

GABRIEL PASCAL

JUNE 4, 1894

JULY 6, 1954

When a colorful personality like "Gabby" Pascal passes out of our lives, it isn't easy to summarize, in a few well chosen words, what there was about him that led us to respect and admire him. We prefer, in fact, to let him provide his own eulogy. The method may be unorthodox, but the Shavian Credo of Gabriel Pascal, in our estimation, renders further obsequies redundant:

I believe in Miracles! and my strange adventurous life has taught me that there are two kinds of miracle. The first is the so-called Religious Miracle, in which I believe unhesitatingly with all the conviction of my soul. The second is the Miracle of Art. A very intimate relationship exists between these two kinds of miracle; and there is, however strange it may seem to the profane, a religious fervour in the great achievements of art.

From my early youth I struggled to discover my own way to work miracles: whether as a scholar vagabond; or as a pilgrim follower of Saint Francis; or as a creative artist. I tried the first two ways, and failed. After long wandering and searching, it was my predestination to meet the man who from my boyhood seemed to me to have, since Shakespeare, the greatest God-given gift of expressing the truth through art. This man was G. B. S.

When I met him, we felt instantly that we shared a belief in both kinds of miracle, and that we knew the secret of the Pied Piper—how to induce genuine children to run away from the boring mediocrities of everyday life. So G.B.S. entrusted me with the magic flute of his art, which he knew I could play.

Without that Shavian flute I would have remained only an ordinary vagabond—very funny, maybe; sometimes writing a little song or two to sing on the road to other hobos; but as a creative artist I would have been useless and meaningless. G.B.S. forced me back to my real artistic integrity which many times in life I seemed to have lost. He encouraged me when I doubted myself, and gave me back faith in my spiritual mission. And it became my life work to produce his plays for the screen.

I believe that in time to come the cinema will be the highest form of popular art, because it will include all the arts in itself. Nothing could be more inspiring for me than the unique task of giving evidence to posterity, through my pictures, of the immortality of the genius of Bernard Shaw.

— A foreword to Marjorie Deans' *Meeting at the Sphinx*
(London, Macdonald & Company, 1946)